

CHAPTER 5 IMPLEMENTATION

(REVISION TO 1989 PLAN AMENDMENT)

This chapter outlines the actions necessary to implement the land use policies and planned actions described by this plan. These actions include proposals to identify needed transportation (road and pull-out) improvements and desirable recreational improvements. It also specifies necessary changes to administrative procedures and state regulatory standards and assigns responsibilities to divisions within DNR for implementation of the Management Plan.

The list of proposed implementation actions is much smaller compared than that contained in the 1989 Plan Amendment. Many of the 1989 proposed actions have been accomplished, are no longer pertinent, or are inappropriate given the conditions that exist at the time of this revision. At the time of the 1989 plan amendment, most of the management controls had not been put in place and most infrastructure improvements had not been built. Since then, the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area and Summit Lake State Recreation Site have been established by Alaska statute, the Management Agreement and Development Lease (for the Government Peaks subunit) have been created and are in force, mineral closures have been enacted, and many of the recommended improvements between Mile 8.0 and Mile 18 have been built or are nearing completion.

Given this, management of the uses within the HPMP will increasingly shift to more of a coordination and review role, primarily exercised by DMLW. The exception is the Government Peaks subunit, where fairly complex land management requirements are recommended for implementation.

Recommendations for implementation in this Plan Amendment focus on those actions that can be accomplished within staff and funding resources and that the various agencies involved in plan implementation can reasonably be expected to accomplish.

Note: The recommendations listed for ADOT/PF and ADF&G are advisory in character unless these agencies adopt this Management Plan.

A. Transportation Recommendations

Improvements. Improvements to the Hatcher Pass Road are important components for the public safety and enjoyment of this area. Lack of pull outs, parking, and inadequate road width, drainage, and a regular avalanche control program have been the key problem areas.

Recommendations for the improvement of the Hatcher Pass Road are listed in Table 1 for the various types of road improvements and pull-out development that are considered

necessary within the next 10 years. Reevaluation of road and pull out requirements should occur at the conclusion of these improvements or every 7 years, whichever comes first. Actual construction is dependent on funding.

Coordination. The following review standards are recommended:

- In implementing their review processes related to road improvements, material sites, or improvements of scenic viewshed, ADOT/PF should consider the pertinent standards of the Management Plan.
- Road or other improvements within known avalanche hazard areas should be coordinated with DMLW and DPOR.

B. Public Recreation Improvements

Public recreation improvements are also identified in Table 1. The purpose of these improvements is to help provide a quality recreational experience on state land to a variety of users, to complement private sector activities, and to enhance tourism related use of the area. Most of the improvements focus on the inclusion of pull-out and scenic overlook improvements as part of the upgrade of Hatcher Pass Road by ADOT/PF between miles 18 and 25 scheduled for SFY 2006-2008. Most necessary road and recreational improvements on this road between miles 8.5 and 18 have already been built. Actual construction is dependent on funding.

C. Agency Responsibilities for Implementation

DNR: Division of Mining, Land, and Water

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. Adjudication of Land Use Applications

DMLW will adjudicate the pending and future applications for grazing, communication sites, material sites, and recreational development, as well as all other uses requiring authorization by DNR, based on this plan's management intent for specific district subunits, areawide policies, and management guidelines.

2. Alpine Ski Area in Government Peak Subunit

DMLW will support the Borough in its development of a ski resort complex in the Government Peak subunit. The process for doing this and the standards for adjudication are identified in the description of this subunit. Development of this area as a ski resort is dependent upon the development of a master plan for the ski complex (and any associated areas) and its approval by the Borough and DNR.

Table 1

**SCHEDULED
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

1. Hatcher Pass Road improvement, MP 18-25.

Project involves reconditioning and paving of Hatcher Pass Road, MP 18-25.
(ADOT/PF)

**SCHEDULED AND PROPOSED
RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS**

Scheduled Improvements

1. Hatcher Pass Nordic Ski Trail System Improvements.

Project involves development of a Hatcher Pass Nordic ski trail system. Project includes parking, a stadium area with an adjacent biathlon range, and a starting area for a series of looping trails consisting of 17 kilometers of international level trails and 17 kilometers of intermediate level family trails. (Borough, with state and federal funding)

Proposed Improvements

1. Recreation related improvements to Hatcher Pass Road, MP 18 to MP 25.

Project involves road realignments, turnout development (paved and unpaved), upgrading of scenic outlook parking area, upgrading of existing turnouts, and development of trailhead parking areas. Projects are to be recommended by DPOR to ADOT/PF for the upgrading of the Hatcher Pass Road, MP 18-25.

3. Coordination with DPOR

DMLW will coordinate with DPOR in the implementation of this plan, particularly as it relates to areas affected by the Management Agreement between the Borough, DPOR, and DMLW within the area affected by the Borough Special Land Use District and the Development Lease. Under the management agreement DPOR is assigned responsibility for enforcement within the areas of state land, while DMLW retains management authority over uses and activities, including the granting of authorizations. DMLW actions will be reviewed by DPOR to determine if enforcement issues may exist if an authorization is granted.

4. Coordination with ADF&G

DMLW will coordinate with ADF&G in assessing recreational development impacts to fish and wildlife and in minimizing and mitigating these impacts, and will coordinate with ADF&G on grazing and moose browse enhancement projects prior to initiation. Land for wildlife habitat enhancement sites may be assigned if recommended by ADF&G and if consistent with the management intent for the subunit.

5. Management of Motorized Uses

DMLW will revise the current Special Use Designation (223585) to close the Government Peak subunit to recreational motorized uses with the exception of snow-machining in certain areas¹. Snow-machining may only be allowed in designated corridors within the Primary and Secondary Ski Areas and the Westside subarea. DPOR is responsible for the enforcement of this stipulation, consistent with the requirements of the management agreement.

6. Revise DNR-Borough Development Lease

The Borough, in conjunction with DMLW and DPOR, will revise the attachments to the Development Lease (ADL 225965). The Development Lease, in its general form, can be retained but appendices that identify the legal description of the affected area and the terms and conditions that accompany the lease require revision. These are to be revised to make them consistent with the spatial boundaries of the Special Land Use District and with the revised requirements for development in the Government Peaks subunit.

7. Revise DNR-Borough Management Agreement

DMLW, with DPOR and the Borough, will revise the management agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various parties within the Government Peaks subunit. The responsibilities of DMLW as they relate to the permitting of state activities and development authorizations needs to be described in some detail, to capture the requirements specify to this subunit for permit and development review so that the

¹ Motorized uses required to conduct emergency operations or support allowed uses are exempt from this requirement.

responsibilities of the various parties are clear. (Other aspects of the management agreement may not need revision.)

Implementation Requirements

1. Modify DNR Special Use Area

DNR will revise the Hatcher Pass Special Use Area (ADL 223585) to reflect the July 2006 Plan Amendment. This will require changes to administrative regulations as well. These changes involve the closure of the Government Peak subunit to recreational motorized uses except as noted in item #6 and to restrict those generally allowed uses under 11 AAC 96 that are inconsistent with the SPUD. (Note: This revision and the proposed changes to regulation accompany this Plan Amendment.)

2. Supersede Current Mineral Orders and Close Subunit to Mineral Entry

DMLW will rescind the current mineral orders (MO 499 and 541) affecting the Government Peaks subunit, replacing it with Mineral Order 1058. MO 1058 closes the subunit to all future mineral entry and development. Current valid existing rights are allowed to continue, but not expand the existing authorized area. (Note: Mineral Order 1406 accompanies the Plan Amendment.)

3. Revise Land Classifications

DNR will revise the current Land Classification Orders (SC-86-022 and SC-89-002) to reflect the land classifications described in Chapter 4 for the four subareas of state land within the Government Peak subunit. (Note: Land Classification Orders SC-86-022-A01 and SC-89-002-A01 accompany the Plan Amendment.)

DNR: Division of Agriculture

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. Coordinate with DMLW and the National Resources Conservation Service in the approval of grazing leases issued within those subunits where grazing is an authorized use. Grazing Operations Plans approved by DOA shall adhere to the management intent of the subunit within which the lease is located and to all other pertinent requirements of the Management Plan, in addition to state statutory and administrative code requirements.

2. If grazing leases are reestablished, DOA shall coordinate with the National Resources Conservation Service and the leaseholder in implementation of forage and range utilization. Stocking rates and range management practices are to be adjusted accordingly.

DNR: Division of Forestry

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. DOF will ensure that all future timber harvests, including access roads, are consistent with the requirements for forest harvest and forest management practices identified in the HPMP areawide policies. Forest Land Use Plans developed by DOF are to be consistent with the standards of the Management Plan.
2. Coordinate timber harvest and access plans in the Hillside subunit with recreational plans and wildlife habitat management activities.
3. Work cooperatively with ADF&G and the University of Alaska to research and develop improved methods for wildlife habitat enhancement through timber harvest. Apply these methods in forest management practices.
4. Perform regeneration surveys on all harvest and enhancement areas. Evaluate and apply the results of these analyses.

DNR: Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. Review ADF&G habitat enhancement proposals and proposed DOF timber harvests included in DOF 5-Year Timber Harvest Schedules to identify effects on scenic values and recreational use. Recommend mitigation measures, if necessary.
2. Review mining plans of operation and Annual Placer Mining Applications for the location of public access, relocation of trails (if necessary), and maintenance of scenic values.
3. Review grazing management plans for compatibility with recreational uses, location of fences, and the maintenance of public access.
4. Coordinate with DMLW, Borough, and the private sector (Government Peak subunit²) in the design and development of trails (winter and summer).
5. Monitor public use, preferences, and conflicts to provide a basis for future adjustments to the recreational and public facilities within the Management Plan.
6. Coordinate with the Borough, State Troopers, DMLW, and the private sector in the improvement of search and rescue capability and other public safety considerations.

² Not including the Southside subarea.

7. Coordinate with the Borough on the development of trails, public facilities, and other uses and structures related to public use of the ski resort area under consideration for development by a private sector entity.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

The following recommendations are advisory in character unless ADF&G adopts the Management Plan.

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. Provide review functions, to include the review of mining plans of operation, Annual Placer Mining Applications, access applications for mining and forestry access and recreational trails, grazing, gravel extraction, and plans for recreational development. Provide recommendations to minimize adverse impacts from these activities, facilitate wildlife management, and protect sensitive wildlife populations or habitats.

Research and Management Functions

1. Provide review functions, to include the review of mining plans of operation, Annual Placer Mining Applications, access applications for mining and forestry access and recreational trails, grazing, gravel extraction, and plans for recreational development. Provide recommendations to minimize adverse impacts from these activities, facilitate wildlife management, and protect sensitive wildlife populations or habitats.

Study and Management Recommendations

1. Moose Browse Enhancement. Assess the forest types and moose productivity to determine areas where enhancement is appropriate. If requested by DNR, prepare an enhancement plan in cooperation with DNR.
2. Moose and Bear Concentrations. Identify moose and brown and black bear concentration areas and provide guidance to DNR for the mitigation of identified conflicts.
3. Tundra Swan Nesting. Identify extent and importance of nesting concentrations of tundra birds on Bald Mountain Ridge and other areas. Identify mitigation measures, especially those related to recreational activity. If appropriate, incorporate recreational use pattern changes into Borough Special Land Use Designation and/or DNR Special Use Designation.
4. In-stream Flow Reservations. Continue stream flow research for Willow Creek, and the lakes and tributaries of the Little Susitna River to establish in-stream flow reservations for fish and wildlife.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Process and Coordination Requirements

1. Coordinate the management of activities and development activities in the Government Peaks subunit. Because proposed ski resort development and subsequent public use of the alpine ski areas (Primary and Secondary Ski Areas) will occur on state land, it is important that the Borough coordinate with DNR in the issuance of state authorizations within the Borough Special Use District.